# THE SCHOLAR

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MADRAS

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# Avataras or Incarnations.

**By Swami Pranaveshananda**

"Whenever thou findest a great soul of immense power and purity, struggling to raise humanity, know that he is born of My Splendour, that I am there working through him."

"Though I am unborn, of changeless nature and lord of beings, yet subjugating My *Prakrati*, I come into being by My own *Maya*."

*Bhagavad Gita.*

ALTHOUGH it is beyond the ken of human reason and intellect to comprehend the philosophy of Incarnations, how an Infinite God can manifest Himself in the flesh and blood and be amongst us as God-Incarnate,—we have to put our faith in these pregnant words of the *Bhagavad Gita*, significant of the Divine Incarnations as a fact. We have also to be guided by the truth that God is Omnipotent, and if He so wills, he can take a human form to lead man from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light and from death to Immortality, for the protection of the good against the wicked and for the re-establishment of *Dharma* on this beautiful earth of his creation. Ordinary man, engrossed as he is in carnality and worldliness and with a strong attachment for the gross things of the world and with his intellect grown blunt due to constant thoughts of material objects, cannot form any idea of this very subtle principle of incarnation. But a man of purified

intellect, who is indowed with what are called the spiritual eyes, can certainly grasp the idea, may see Him face to face and become convinced that He out of His infinite mercy takes up a human form whenever material ideas are about to blindfold the spiritul vision of man. People often ask how it is possible for an Inifinite God to assume the finite form of a human body. When they ask this question they have evidently a mistaken notion of infinity. They at best, with their undeveloped mind, think that infinity means vastness of matter. Infinity applied to God is unlimitedness of a purely spiritual order—a boundless ocean of spiritual consciousness. In this sense, it becomes easy even for a rational man to understand the idea of an Infinite Being taking the form of man.

Moreover, the divinity of God is manifest more in man than in any other being. In a man who is marked by an overflowing love of God and inebriated with the idea of Divine Consciousness has God incarnated Himself. Such a man thinking of God without cessation becomes God Himself. The real significance of Incarnation is the worship of man as God—to see God in man is the real God-vision, for so long as we are human beings, our conception of God cannot but be human. It is said that two kinds of men do not worship God as man—the ignorant man who has no idea of religion and the saint who has gone beyond all personality and human failings.

Some people think that *Avataras* or Incarnations are not historical personages and that their lives are merely allegorical. Psychologically speaking, every idea has a form and these Divine Incarnations are Divine Ideas or Visualisations of *Brahman*, the Absolute. According to the needs of time and place, these Forms of Brahman appear on the earth from time to time in order to meet the varying requirements of the human mind. God understands human failings, and with no other motive than to uplift the erring humanity He is born as man. And because ordinary man due to his limitations cannot comprehend the meaning of these Incarnations, he calls it a mere allegory. The idea of Divine Incarnation is a fact to be seen and realised by the pure mind.

Ego is the primary cause of body. So it goes without saying that this ego causes the body of even an *Avatara*. But in the case of an *Avatara*, the ego is purified, is not so stout as that of a worldly man. An *Avatara* is never caught in the quagmire of *Samsara*. Although an *Avatara* takes up a form, the material with which his body is formed is purely *Sattvic* (subtle) and his purified mind is always attuned to the Absolute. He can merge

himself in *Samadhi* and come out of it at will to dwell in the sense plane.

If we study the history of the advent of these *Avataras*, we find that they are always born at some psychological moments in the annals of the world. The universe, according to the Hindus, is moving in cycles of wave forms. It rises, reaches its zenith, then falls and remains in the hollow for sometime, and then again rises and falls *ad infinitum*. What is true of the universe is also true of the spiritual life of the people. And whenever the wave of spirituality falls and materialism rises high, a huge wave comes and always on the topmost crest of the wave is the Incarnation. With him comes tremendous power of spirituality which purifies the world. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna says :—"When the huge tidal wave comes, all the little brooks and ditches become full to the brim without any effort or consciousness on their own part; so when an Incarnation comes, a tidal wave of spirituality breaks upon the world, and people feel spirituality almost full in the air." By the grace of these Incarnations the realisation of God dawns upon man without any difficulty or much effort, as they can transmit spirituality by touch or mere will. Even a worst sinner becomes illumined at their command. Well has it been said that an Incarnation is the ocean of mercy and does good to humanity without any motive.

In the case of Incarnations, their spiritual greatness is manifest even from their childhood. Sri Krishna, for example, did many things in his childhood which convinced his parents and relatives that he was of Divine Origion. Jesus Christ, when he was only a boy, attracted by his universal love the birds of the forest and fed them with his own hands. Buddha while a boy fell into a trance under a Bodhi tree. The same thing happened in the case of Sri Ramakrishna two or three times between his age of seven and nine years. He passed into the superconscious state without any effort.

History has failed to record the details of the spiritual strivings of these great Incarnations of the world, except in the case of two or three. The history of their sojourn in this world has been written, their life-giving message also has been recorded, but the period of their *Sadhana*, how they attained to God-consciousness is enshrouded in mystery. Perhaps the biographers were loath to see the imperfections of man in their Divine Masters. For, writes Swami Saradananda, the biographer of Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master :—"In our own times even we know how devotees of Sri Ramakrishna did not actually believe that he was suffering from any disease, though they saw him suffering

before their very eyes. They thought it was a mere show." Or may be these biographers thought these strivings are superhuman and beyond the scope of common folk. Let Sri Ramakrishna himself speak on the point:—"When God incarnates as man, he has to work out the problems of life like a true human being, and like man, enjoys or suffers, and ultimately ascends to Godhead and reaches perfection by undergoing struggles, hardships and penances." Otherwise the significance of an *Avatara* is of very little consequence to humanity. An *Avatara* actually demonstrates in his life how the imperfect man by his own *sadhana* can attain to perfection. So it is regrettable that the biographers, perhaps due to their excessive devotion to their divine Masters, failed to record the incidents of this most important part of their lives, *viz.* the period of their spiritual striving, and the world is really poorer for that. Their experiences would have certainly served as milestones on our way to God-realisation. The series of experiences they had during the different periods of their *sadhana*, with what faith and devotion to the ideal they proceeded towards the goal, their behaviour and mental states, their spiritual thirst at every stage—these without doubt would have helped many an earnest seeker to compare notes while plodding on their way to the goal and prevented them from taking false steps.

It is not given to all men to recognise these Incarnations. It is said that when Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra came into the world, only seven sages could know that he was an incarnation of God. One can know Him through his own grace and this grace descends on those who are pure in body, mind and speech, who are devoted and who discriminate between the real and the unreal and perseveres in meditation. One cannot definitely say that He graces only the pure in heart, for he is beyond all human laws. For we find even sinners become saints at his bidding. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "Do rely on Him, be like the dry leaf at the mercy of the wind." He also said: "The wind of his grace is always blowing, what you need to do is to unfurl your sail." An *Avatara* in his life-time always remains unrecognised by his own people and it is those who live far off are first attracted by his Divinity.

An *Avatara*, although living to all intents and purposes like an ordinary man and pursuing the ordinary course of life, his mind at will souring high in the region of the spirit brings us the tidings of an eternal life of that world. He does not live for himself, for there is nothing in this world that attracts his imagination. His only motive in living in the mortal frame is to help mankind transcend the miseries of life and reach the fountain of

Eternal Bliss. In his life-time he shows the divine path to many and carries them across the ocean of *Maya*. He solves the problems of life easily and puts forth the truths in a very sweet and simple language, but withal forcible, which can be understood even by a man of average intelligence.

It is only an *Avatara* who can alter the doom of the people. An ordinary saint, however great he may be, cannot claim to do this. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna. " A *Siddha Purusha* is like an archeologist who removes the superincumbent earth and dust, and lays open an old well which had been covered up owing to ages of disuse. An *Avatara* or Incarnation is like a great engineer who sinks a new well even in a place where there was no water before. Whereas the former can give salvation to those men who have the waters of salvation near at hand, the *Avatara* saves him too whose heart is devoid of all love and dry as a desert."

An ordinary *Jiva* realises Truth after prolonged penance and saves himself with great effort, but an *Avatara* reaches the Truth without much striving and becomes the Saviour of innumerable souls. No doubt the *Avataras* also have to fight against the subtle forces of nature and conquer, but in their case the battle is not so very tough as it is in the case of ordinary saints.

The majority of us cannot form any idea of the Impersonal God, the realisation of which is our goal. The Principles of religion are there in the scriptures, even a child can read them, but they mean nothing if they are not practised in life. An *Avatara* does this. He is the embodiment, as it were, of these principles and an earnest seeker after Truth coming in contact with him learns to practise them himself and moulds his life accordingly. The demonstration of principles is as important as the principles themselves. An *Avatara* is, therefore, worshipped. Even the Buddhists and Muhammedans, who do not believe in a Personal God, also seek the help of the Great Men after whose names their religions are called. In the case of Buddhists there is not a Vihara where there is not installed the image of Buddha.

The Buddhists have made a God of him, although they may not actually use the word " God " before him. He is to them the best amongst mankind. He is the demonstrator of Eternal Principles or Eternal Moral Law—call what you will. The Hindus also call an *Avatara Purushothama*, i. e., " Best amongst men ". There is really no difference between their worship of Buddha and the worship of an *Avatara* by the Hindus. So also with Muhammedans. Instead of one Person they worship innumerable saints. They keep the examples of these saints before them and practise the principles of their religion. So without

these Incarnations, the religious principles would have sunk into oblivion. The thought of Incarnations puts into our mind the great ideal. These *Avataras*, manifest in our souls and help us to become like them. Without the example of these Great Ones, the true meaning of purity, selfless love, mercy and kindness would have been a mystery to us Had it not been for these Incarnations, it is doubtful whether the words like "Omniscīene", "Omnipotent" etc. would have ever found a place in the lexicon, It is the *Avataras* in their transcendental states became "All-knowing", "All powerful".

The secret of their power lies in the fact that they live the life most intensely. There is perfect harmony between their thoughts and words. Wherever they go they create a divine atmosphere about them and people surrounding them, caught in the glamour of that Divine Light, instinctively bow down to them. They seldom teach in words, except when the devotees approach them with reverence and prayer to clear their haunting doubts. They never speak in vain. Yes, to many they have to read aloud their potent thoughts and experiences, because these people do not understand their inner life and intense thought. These irresistible words of wisdom are afterwards compiled by their intimate disciples and go by the name of "Gospels". Their life is infinitely superior to their expressions for we should not lose sight of the fact that these words are meant for those who are in a lower range of mind to suit their spiritual needs. They not only give these instructions to their disciples but also see that they are carried out by them. The subtle forces of nature being perfectly under their control, they exhilarate and encourage these intimate disciples in their spiritual practices by appearing unto them in their visions in a spiritual form not only during their life-time but even after the dissolution of the body.

An *Avatara* is armed with tremendous faith in himself and in his message to the world, for he directly perceives the Truth He is born with a mission and with unparalleled determination he fulfils the purpose of his life, come whatever may. He fashions the minds of his disciples just as he chooses, as a potter does his clay vessels, and sends them forth to broadcast his message to the world. The disciples become willing instruments in his hands. Such is the power an Incarnation wields and the disciples obey him implicitly, and it is for their own good and the well-being of the world.

The scriptures clearly lay down that an *Avatara* alone can come down from the state of *Samadhi* to the ordinary plane of consciousness for the good of humanity. The soul, of an average man when it attains to super-consciousness, remains in that state

only for a period of 21 days, after which time its body drops down like a sere leaf. His case can be compared to a salt doll, which trying to measure the depth of the ocean, melted itself directly it touched the water. But an *Avatara* retains a shadow of desire through a great effort of will, so that he may be of help to the earnest seekers of Truth.

With a heart overflowing with the milk of divine love and kindness, an *Avatara* sets himself to the formidable task of reconstructing society. He works on the line of least resistance. No word of condemnation escapes his holy lips His work may not achieve immediate results, for he knows that society must be led upwards only step by step. That is why it takes centuries to spread his gospel. He in his life-time moulds the character of a handful of disciples. They, in their turn, change the hearts of hundreds and thousands, and thus the message reaches the remotest corner of the world by passage of time.

Studying the lives of these *Avataras*, one cannot but be impressed with the conviction that all of them were necessary at those particular periods of the spiritual history of mankind and that each of them played a definite part. Sri Krishna, for example, sanctified all duties—from the duties of a Brahmin down to the duties of a *Chandala*—and that was a peculiar demand of his age, and salvation was secured for those who worked in society with non-attachment in their respective positions in life. Buddha's message was to root out desire and selfishness. For in his time a very hideous form of selfishness prevailed. He had to grapple with the materialism of the redoubtable Charvakas who advocated, "Eat, drink and be merry. There is no God, soul, nor heaven. Religion is the concoction of wicked priests." Similarly, the key-note of the message of Jesus Christ is "Renounce and realise and be ready, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Mohammed was the prophet of equality, of the brotherhood of mankind, and that was the outstanding necessity of his age. Synthetic harmony of all religions, which Sri Ramakrishna preaches and lays stress on, is the need of the age, for the warring nations of the world have to be united into one bond of love. Peace will reign on earth by the practice of reverence and regard for every religion and spiritual culture of the world. Thus each Incarnation has a particular message to the world peculiarly his own, and his whole life is a glowing demonstration of that message.

# George Saintsbury.

**By M. Chalapathi Rau, M.A., B.L.**

IF the late George Edward Bateman Saintsbury were born an American, he would have never allowed 'Pussyfoot' Johnson and his tribe of Prohibitionists to come across his path. He would have careered as a minor gangster in the company of Al Capone or broken his head in a temper among factious boot-leggers. For next to good books he loved only good wine, and it was his boast that he had tasted not only all the minor works of minor authors of Europe but also all the minor wines of minor epochs. On wine and bibbing he wrote with much experience and garrulous gusto, and always spoke of sack with fabulous delight and Falstaffian freedom. He imparted the same flavour to his criticism of books, for a good book to him was not so much the life-blood of a master-spirit as a rare old barrel of 'distilled damnation'. It was rather unconventional for a prince of pandits such as he to burst all bonds of pedantary and write in a chatty gossipy, garrulous way with dramatic monologues, soliloquies, and sudden asides. His scorn for philology and foggy scholarship, his contempt for critical rigmarole and clap-trap and hairsplitting were so notorious that for a decade or two Saintsbury almost came to mean charlatanism among scholars. But his reading was so wide, his voice so voluminous, his scholarship and native shrewdness so monumental that his books are not yet out-of-date while men who have touched anything and adorned nothing are already old and archaic. The high-brow has, true to his colours, rather handled him severely, while the low-brow has never read him; but Saintsbury, however, survived so many fashions, revivals, and birthday celebrations that his authority remains authentic above the present day battle of books. He never kept himself in touch with younger writers, never kowtowed before them or caressed them, as Gosse took care to do; and the younger folk have never forgiven him for that and have let him alone as an old fogey, who was a relic of Victorian snobbery and omniscience. There have been only a few ancient-minded men like J. C. Squire, J. B. Priestly, the late John Freeman and T. Earle Welby who have appreciated some part of his personaliy or other. One should have liked him for his style alone, which was the perfect trumpet of his personality, and revealed all the bluff honesty and bravado of the man, his encyclopaedic reading and experience and knowledge, his downrightness and Olympian dignity, while it also hinted at all the features of his massive

face, the high and broad forehead, the skull of Thackery and the bushy beard of Anthony Trollope.

Saintsbury would have given anything to pass his old age among the great Victorians, amidst the world of Thackerays and Trollopes. His admiration for Thackeray was so great that an year or two ago he collected all his papers on him and published them. It was he that brought Thackery's style into repute, and he that worked manfully to stem the reaction against Tennyson. Nobody was so sure of the humanity and catholicity of his own judgment. He never gave a cock-eyed decision. Of any author or book he formed a historical, comparative, scientific, romantic, realistic view, and if it was not the view of T. S. Eliot or Aldous Huxley or some other modernist, it was an all comprehensive view, which lay bare the foundations of a genius. In life he was always an uncompromising Conservative, but his boast was that, in literature, he belonged to all ages. His *magna opera* uphold that boast. The 'History of Criticism and Taste in Europe', the 'History of English Prosody', the 'History of English Prose Rhythm' are monumental histories. None of them is thin, or half-hearted, or second-hand. Every sentence has the ring of research, every argument is marshalled forth with conviction or honest doubt, every paragraph is a pyramid of reason, and even the footnotes, so irreverent, so irrelevant, are a delight to those who understand and know him. As a critic of critics, he puts in all his profoundity and gusto. It must have been an laborious and wearisome task. But he never wearies us. Even the smaller fry get all his familiar jokes. When he writes on great subjects like Aristotle or Longinus or Coleridge, the divine Trinity of Criticism, he rises to the highest raptures of rhetoric, and when he catches hold of Rymer or some other imposter, he hangs him till he is dead. He makes no allowances but is cruel and almost cannibalistic. The whole thing is delightful. The interchapters chime in like a chorus. On Prosody he is full of pepper and delightfully partisan and does battle with such a metrist as Robert Bridges, while his comments on each poet, as usual, snappy and wilful and salted, and his *obiter dicta*, are a good guide to anyone who tries to master English verse rhythms. On Prose rhythm he ranges from Dionysius of Halicarnassus down to the present day, and though a pioneer in the field has all a surety and brilliance of his own. The book, besides being other things, is the best anthology of the greatest English Prose, and deserves to be carefully studied by any one who tries to write great and not merely good prose. These two great books are of special importance to the Indo-Anglian writers, who write or affect to write literature in English. They have been often mocked at for their bad metre and worse composition of vowel and consonantal music.

It is because of a lack of detailed knowledge of the growth of English verse rhythms, their texture, nature, and concatenation. Prose has its rhythms no less than verse, and it is because this fact is ignored that Indian writers do not attain the highest pitch of mesmeric rapture in spite of their power to coin phrases and weave long-drawn sentences. Saintsbury supplies all the material necessary for a thorough study of the twin harmonies of prose and poetry and we would do well to pay more attention to his matchless guide-books. His other works are not so gergantuan in bulk or scope, but they are quite characteristic and scholarly, and wise and witty. In 'The Peace of the Augustans' he solves in his own way the puzzle of Pope as a poet, and makes a brilliant defence of Grubb Street. His monographs on 'Dryden' and 'Arnold' and 'The English Novel' and 'Lord Derby' are colourless but profound; and there can be no end even to a bare enumeration of all his works, notes, introductions, prefaces, for they are legion. His contributions to the Cambridge History must, however, be mentioned as solid, especially on the obscurer authors. So also one must remember his 'Scrape' Books. They reveal him in his charm and Conservative spectacles. His reminiscences about his life at Oxford, his 'second' class in the examination, his battle with Mark Pattison, his life as school master and Saturday Reviewer, are always pleasing, while his little necrologies reveal an affection for men which is not revealed elsewhere.

Saintsbury is the touchstone of sanity. If his style needs any defence, it is the same with every other style. He did not like to write pompously and platitudinously. He had a contempt for paradoxes and hackneyed phrases. His own phrasing is sometimes so much purple, his syntax so ruthless and complex, his footnotes so learned and funny about anything from casuistry and cricket to cookery, that the average student cannot follow him. But if you grow accustomed to his gait and voice, his phrases are delightful and even his juggernant syntax so smooth and well-oiled. The ordinary professor and text-book writer would write in an impersonal and medium-like manner. Saintsbury was jaunty and jerky, and very personal, and wielded often, as he himself wrote of Carlyle, the very sword of Goliath. It was a sharp and downright sword. The modern highbrow way of criticism is to take up a passage, hold it under a microscope, and dig deeper and deeper into the consciousness of the author. It is to murder and dissect the mind. It is the way of Desmond MacCarthy and Virginia Woolf. Every age has its own attitude and almost every critic his own method. Saintsbury's was his own, and without being so familiar or ghoulish or unscrupulous he never suffered

from feelings of chivalry. He picked up all the bad rhymes of Elizabeth Barret Browning and pilloried her for poetastry; and impaled Matthew Arnold for calling Moliere a poet. He had above all a bull-dog courage. Quiller-Couch alone can approach him in chattiness and a certain homeliness. Raleigh was as sprightly and unconventional and distilled his fragrance into unforgettable poetic phrases. Gosse had an urbanity and seraphic grace of his own. But Quiller-Couch is too chummy, Gosse too amateurish, Raleigh too pampered beside the fine enraptured freedom of Saintsbury. He had a grandfatherly grandeur of his own. We will miss the boom of his voice, the staccato sharpness, the quixotic manners of the man; but amidst all the swagger and bluster and sound, the smoke and dust of controversies, we cannot miss in his books the essential scholarship, which was the core of George Saintsbury.

# Technocracy.

**By B. S. S.**

AMONG the various causes that have led up to the present economic distress of the world, H. G. Wells in his book *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*, draws attention to the sudden return of the nations to the gold standard after the War. The economists are up against the rapid progress of science and the consequent displacement of man by the machine and the large amount of unemployment following it. Wells (page 487) describes the attitude of Prof. Soddy on these matters as saying, "We men of Science have abolished toil and people are still toiling; we have created plenty and everywhere there is want. What has got between us and them?" The answer is plain. *It is Gold.*

During the course of the last century, Gold and Silver have been the chief standards of currency; silver to a large extent and gold progressively displacing silver to a limited extent. The story of gold has been well expressed by H. G. Wells (P. 38) as being on its "long indirect and solemnly idiotic journey to be sterilised in the vaults of the hoarding powers". In this short story of gold could be traced the labours of the workers at the mines, fluctuations in its value in regard to the available supply, its curious and its mysterious relation to silver value, deflation and inflation of currency to control market prices etc. In short human energy has been spent on winning this metal from the earth, and human ingenuity has been spent in fixing a value on it, only to be deposited at the end in the banks! This process has been greatly hastened and precipitated by the Great War and has brought us face to face with an economic disaster of a tremendous order, much sooner than it would have overtaken us at a normal rate. Production of gold is limited in quantity and also to particular countries, and as such gold as a standard of currency for all nations and at all times, seems to be of little value.

This strange and unconvincing position of gold as a standard of currency has been well realised by a group of engineers and scientists of America, who suggest a scientific attack on the problem of World currency. They consider that the present economic crisis is essentially Technological and that it could be solved only along scientific lines by men with a technological outlook. These 'Technocrats' have made an energy of the United States of America, and have come to the conclusion that 'Energy'

which is capacity to do work is the only true measure of the capacity to purchase or to earn. The unit of energy, they believe will be a better measure of purchasing power than gold, for every individual possesses to some extent capacity to do work. This they think will ultimately lead to a more even distribution of wealth than exists at present.

Apart from the various arguments that have been put forward against Technocracy, it is seen that an equal distribution of purchasing power cannot be obtained by the adoption of energy unit alone. The union of the farm and the factory, Henry Ford's criterion of true and stable prosperity, cannot be achieved in as much as the energy out-put of the farm is far lower than that of the factory. It is at this point that the concept of ERN put forward by Dr. G. J. Fowler independently of the Technocrats* appears significant Dr. Fowler introduces the food factor along with this energy factor. Among the various requirements of food the Nitrogen factor is known to be constant under all varieties of climatic conditions. Thus the ERN is only a product of the capacity to work (denoted by ER) and the Nitrogen requirement (N) of a normal inidvidual. The energy of an individual depends on the food, and since Nitrogen is constant it is evident that the ERN, a combination of the two, is a real measure of purchasing power. This concept brings the farm and factory, the agriculturally-minded and the industrially-minded on a common basis; for a manufacturing country is rich in energy and poor in Nitrogen out-put, whereas the reverse is the case in an agricultural country. A product of these two factors would be more or less of a standard value throughout the world.

Another advantage in this idea is that the source of Nitrogen is not so limited as that of gold. The atmosphere about us is a vast ocean of Nitrogen. It undergoes a variety of changes by natural agencies. like thunder and lightning, bacteria in soils, enters into plant and animal life and goes back to the soil as waste, again to return to the atmosphere by bacterial and other agencies. Thus nature aids in the circulation of Nitrogen and to keep store of it in the air at a constant level.

Of course, the abstract of Nitrogen for human purposes has been successfully carried out in recent years and with the increase of electrical and engineering enterprises this abstraction of Nitrogen might be expected to go on at a rate perhaps faster than the winning of gold from the mines; so that there might be cause for alarm that these human agencies might take away available Nitrogen from the air at a rate faster than Nature is able to

* cf. *Capital*, 3rd March 193 ; *Current Science*, 1932, Vol. 1 No. 2.

replenish the atmosphere through the agency of bacteria etc. But the endeavours of the bio-chemest are already making rapid progress towards the conservation of Nitrogen and the situation may not be so alarming.*

The impatient economist is only too anxious to enter "Technocracy" in the infantile mortality list. Great ideas and movements are born only in times of acute distress. These may be adopted all atonce or rejected by the impatient and the conservative perhaps to be adopted at a later date after suitable modifications to suit the political and the social differences. However, it is more than evident that the unit of purchasing power must in some way depend ultimately on the capacity to do work and the food to acquire enough energy for that.

* In a private letter Dr. G. J. Fowler says that the situation need not be so alarming as the Nitrogen above one Sq. mile of land amounts to 20 million tons or enough to supply the world's present requirements for 20 years. Of this amount only a very small fraction, i. e. about 0. 000, 002 is actually in circulation among animals, plants and bacteria. Thus the human body only keeps 10 grms. in circulation, under normal conditions.

# A Historical Parallel.

**By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.**

IT is not one of the lessons of history that a victorious culture is superior to the culture which it overthrows. The lesson is rather the reverse in many instances. It is easy to sing the praises of each epoch as it arrives and of each culture as it ascends the throne of state. It is a facile task to see and declare the finger of Providence in every ringing up or ringing down of the curtains of Time upon the stage of Life and to read that page of the Philosophy of History in which it is written that nothing succeeds like success and nothing fails like failure. The history of Humanity cannot be represented by a straight line, vertical or horizontal. It is rather a forward-flowing stream with many eddies and many obstructive hills ahead and frequent stagnant pools and even backward currents. This becomes apparent when we view, with a calm and dispassionate eye, the great procession of world ideas and the historic march of cultures down the road of Time. Greece was not greater than Persia or India ; Rome was not greater than Greece; nor were the German invaders who overthrew the Roman culture greater than Rome.

The ancient Hindu civilisation was one of the great peaks of human achievement. It was born in greatness and it grew into greater greatness still. But it had its own seeds of decay. It is not my purpose here to describe its unique splendour or the dry rot that began to set in. The civilisations that overthrew it in succession had more vigour but were certainly less noble and ethical and spiritual. The Hindu States failed to achieve thorough solidarity despite the ethical and spiritual greatness of their common culture. When the crash came it was as much due to internal decay as to external violence. The dark ages that followed defeat were a very sad spectacle. The situation can be aptly described in the words in which Professor Cesare Fligno describes the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. The words would apply to all the cultures overthrown by more vigorous but less ethical and spiritual cultures, by stronger but less noble and civilised peoples. He says:

> The upheaval struck them with stupor; they felt helpless; life which had been so harassing became more harassing still; the administration of justice which has been corrupt became a travesty and a mockry, for the scornful ferocity of the new masters ignored the restrictions of such laws as they had issued themselves ; the people suffered hunger, violence and insult but they did not all die. If the crumbling of the massive organization of

civil life turned them into beings more enslaved, ignorant and miserable, they certainly would not forget, when still abiding in the cities where they had dwelt for generations, that their forefathers had been more powerful, cultured, and richer than they. If the invaders despised them as cowards, they in their turn scorned the invaders as savages; the recollection of their own past glories became a refuge and a comfort, and thus a source of immense strength and vitality. The more they suffered in the darkness of the present, the more light was reflected upon the past; recollections under such circumstances could not be turned into history, but materialized into legends, and were the more enduring for it.

The Hindu culture had its parallel in the Greek culture. They were both great though they were greatly unlike. The Greek culture became rotton within and was then smashed by the Roman power. The Hindu culture became rotten within and was overthrown by the Muslim culture but survived it. Its survival was in a debilitated form. Fortunately it did not die as a social and political force as the Greek culture did. But it is now being attacked by the Western culture with an energy of attack which was not experienced before. It seems to me that the parallel instance of Greek and Roman cultures is more apt and applicable than is apparent at first sight. The British culture has many of the merits and demerits of the Roman culture just as the Hindu culture, has many of the merits and demerits of the Greek culture. There are, of course, many points of difference. Historical analogies are facile and frequent, but very often comparisons are more odious than odorous and fail to carry conviction when pressed too far. But they are valuable as means of enforcing lessons which are true but fail to convince when presented in an abstract form whereas they forcibly persuade and generate conviction when concretised in the light of historical comparisons.

The points of difference between Greek and Hindu cultures are many and vital. The blossomings of the Greek spirit in the realms of the real as well as in the realms of the ideal are different from the blossomings of the Hindu spirit. But they are similar in their nobility and refinement, in their emphasis on the ethical and spiritual life. Similarly, the British culture has greater virility and fecundity than the Roman culture. The *Pax Britannica* is nobler and more durable than the *Pax Romana*. The spirit of the Commonwealth has leavened the imperial power more in the British Empire than it ever did in the Roman Empire. But all the same the parallel between the Roman and the British cultures is true and has many a valuable lesson for the present and for the future.

Rome, unlike Greece, was not a great originator but was a great organizer. Asquith has said well; " Alike in literature, in

art, in philosophy, and in religion, Rome built the bridge over which many of the best thoughts and the finest models of antiquity found their way into the Mediaeval and thence into the Modern world. Her genius was not creative but assimilative; its function was not to originate but to adapt; and not unfrequently, in the process of adaptation, to transmute". Rome was not great in science or religion. Rome first imbibed the Greek religion and later on imbibed Christianity. It led to the fusion of Christianity with Greek thought and enabled Christianity to conquer the world through its conquest of the Roman culture. It made practical the great Greek philosophy which it borrowed and assimilated, and gave to the humble though triumphant Christian cult the vitality of a world-institution and a world-religion. The Roman mind was practical and eclectic. In literature and art also the conqueriug Roman was, as Horace said, the slave of captive Greece. Indeed literature and art in the West even to-day are vitalised by Greek concepts and expressed through Greek forms.

But Rome was supreme as road-maker and as law-maker and as administrator. Rome made great roads on a grand scale and opened up the world. She did so for the convenience of her own armies. But the roads had the effect of linking up peoples. Eventually, Rome extended the franchise to bring about a fusion of interests between herself and the peoples committed to her charge. As G. H. Stevenson says: "The inevitable result of intercourse between rulers and subjects was the disappearance of the distinction between them, and the creation of a world citizenship." Rome's gift of Law was also one of her supreme gifts to the world. As Asquith says: "This was the domain in which Rome showed constructive genius. She founded, developed, and systematized the jurisprudence of the world." Rome contributed the idea of the *jus naturale* or the *jus gentium* as the universal element in contrast with the national specialities (*jus civile*). It has been said well: "Law to the Roman was not simply something positive and enacted, but existed in its own right in order to sasisfy human needs". Roman law was, in fact, the expression of Roman common sense and character and culture. It was the creator and also the creature of the Roman family and the Roman State. We find in the Roman families the great virtues expressed by the words *gravitas*, *pietas* and *simplicitas*. We find in the Roman State also the same great virtues. It was Rome that expanded the Greek City-State into the Nation-State and later on into the Imperial State. It was Rome that showed the way to harmonise central and local administration. It was Rome that conceived and worked out the idea of a common imperial citizenship and of the essential unity of the trinity, viz.,

citizenship, law and government. But Rome had two great defects which are not without parallels to-day. As H. Stuart Jones says: "They (the Romans) mistook the means for the end, and forgot (as the best of administrators are prone to do) that the State was made for man and not men for the State." Further, Rome was a believer in over-centralisation and in an ever-growing bureaucracy which such centralisation inevitably involves.

The inferences are obvious enough and are best left to be drawn. The British genius is more assimilative than creative. Britain, like Rome, is not a great originator but is a great organizer. Her literature and art are no doubt greater and more original than those of Rome. In science, abstract as well as applied, she has achieved signal successes. But all the same, Hindu literature and art and philosophy and religion are as far superior to hers as the Greek literary and philosophical achievements were to the Roman. The British superiority, like the Roman superiority, lies really in her ability to open up the country and maximise its productive power and in her legal and political institutions. But the British genius has all the defects of the Roman genius in an intensified form. Britain has a unique opportunity in India—an opportunity that Rome never had in as ample a measure and that no other nation ever had in any similar measure however small. She has to deal with an indigenous culture which, though overborne, is vital and strong. Nay, just as Rome was the unconscious means of broadcasting Greek culture, so is Britain the predestined means of broad-casting Hindu culture for the refinement and betterment of the world. Along the roads of British political expansion will go the expansion of Hindu culture. Will Britain realise her mission of revitalising and broad-casting the indigenous culture of India? If she does, the result would be the eternal youth and magnificence of both to the gain of Man and to the joy of God. If she does not, both will die and disappear to the loss of man and to the grief of God.

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# A Matter of Snakes.

By K. Krishnamurti.

"CONGRATTERS, old man," I said. Ganapathy, the latest bridegroom, grinned amiably and shook my proffered hand warmly. "Thanks, old horse," he returned.

Ganapathy was now surrounded by a good-natured crowd and over-whelmed with enquiries as to the details of the ceremony. He vainly protested that it had all been quite ordinary, no special incidents had happened. Here I stepped in.

"No, Ganapathy, no marriage is ever entirely colourless. There will be many little matters—trivial in themselves—but which to the chief actors of the drama are 'tremendous trifles'. Stretching the figure a bit further, it is an occasion of many little comedies—and otherwise."

"True," admitted he. "But the whole business is too recent for me to view it critically or even calmly. So I vote that my yarn be postponed and in its place, we just now have some anecdotes of marriage time from yourself."

"Bravo, Ganapathy. Pay the blighter back in his own coin. Now, Sir, come up with our old friend SRK—surely his adventures are not all exhausted so soon." Thus urged a group of voices.

I am but human. To a story-teller, the popularity of a character of his is a dangerously sweet thing. He can never tire of the creatures of his imagination. So I might perhaps be pardoned if I was somewhat gratified at the request. I started spinning my yarn.

A marriage is the occasion for general enjoyment (I began). The grand decorations and the gay music are but symbols of this great underlying sentiment. We mean to give a jolly good time to all our guests and neighbours and to have as many happy hearts and cheery faces around us as possible. Every man will find something to enjoy according to his own tastes and lights. If he wears his contentment on his face, he gives ample recompense to his host. And it is perhaps worth while spending some money if only we can manage to catch a joyous atmosphere.

Once in his eventful youth, SRK happened to attend a marriage festival at an acquaintance's in A——. This worthy and

inclined-to-be-obese brahmin, who later developed into a social reformer and posed as a Mahatma was, believe it or not, in reality a great lover of things good and enjoyable. To see him on such occasions when happily out of his own native village, you would never have guessed what fate had in store for him. He went about like a meal-hunter. His wardrobe was modest and his toilet simple.

Imagine him then in the morning, attired in a silk robe after bath, sitting at breakfast. And don't make any mistake about it, pray, a substantial meal. Very much so. The guest rose to the call of duty heroically and did yeoman service with (no, not knife and fork) finger and hand.

Two hours later. SRK was passing through the back hall in the building en route to the side department which served out 'pan' to the guests and workers. He had a glimpse of the underground larder or store-room. The door had been left open by the keeper who had gone to get a chew leaving a small boy—the bride's young brother—in charge. This spirited youngster of eight had gone away in pursuit of a stray cat. Through the open door the smell of over-ripe plantains and mangoes drifted on to the keen nostrils of SRK. He halted and gazed about him. There was no one in the immediate vicinity.

Now poets may philosophise and sing "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." But Mr. Iyer was rightly of the opinion that "With a tasty tit-bit, 'tis now or ne'er." That stray line put part of his philosophy in an admirable nutshell. You may be incredulous. Think of it, the solemn old reformer SRK! You shake your heads. But there is no knowing what solemn old men may have done in such festive moments, when the heart was young. Besides, the very air was infectious with the scent of fruit and the sound of light-hearted bustle. SRK decided—"the chew can wait." Quite so. This was a much better proposition, and nearer home.

He took care to close the cellar door behind him. Now plantain fruit and others began to vanish with great speed and peelings and mango seeds began to rise in a heap. Time stood still, if I may borrow the favourite expression of the romanticist. "This is tolerable good graft," opined Mr. Iyer, eyeing his seventh mango.

"This is tolerable good fun," thought the saucy kid, peeping through the door. "What a rag, if I could lock him in and fetch grandfather to see the fun." He shot the outside bolt home and ran to fetch the Grand Old Man of the house.

Grandfather was busy haranguing the modern-minded father on certain matters of form and ritual. He was in the middle of a hot denunciation of all things new when he felt a tug at his arm. He peered at the boy through his old-fashioned spectacles. "What do you want, my boy?" he asked benevolently, for he was in truth a nice chap at heart. "Grandfather, grandfather' just run up with me to the cellar. I want to show you something. Hurry" he pulled the astonished old man away, who expostulated that he was not so young as he had been. "The boy is at one of his silly pranks," commented the father, smiling.

Meanwhile, grandfather slowly descended the cellar steps and threw the door open. Quick as he tried to be SRK had been quicker. He had heard.footsteps. For one terrible instant, his chicken heart melted within him. He had a towel on his shoulders. He grabbed the heap of peel and mango seeds and rolled it up in the towel. He rose up from this duty as "Grandfather" stepped in. The latter's glasses almost dropped from his nose in his amazement. "What—what—" he stammered. Then seeing confusion on one face and jubilation on the other, he addressed SRK grimly. Once the shock was gone, he was bitingly polite.

"Of all inconvenient places, this is about the worst for our guests. May I inquire if yon could not get better accomodation?"

SRK was at his wit's end. His cleverness availed him little, "I came in,seeing a serpent,"he blurted out. "It is hiding somewhere here. I was just poking about," he added glibly.

The old gentleman was rattled for the moment. "Are you sure," he quivered. SRK nodded dumbly. "Where, where," pursued the old man nervously and drew Gopal to the door. "Call in somebody, boy. We must have the room sifted out. Very dangerous. Sundaram ! Appu ! Where are all the rascals gone ? They are invariably missing when needed. Lazy fools." Sundaram, Appu and company presented themselves with abashed countenances. "Shirkers, all of you. A snake has got in here. Hurry, rake it up and remove it. Kill it if necessary, but for the love of God, be careful.

He led SRK away and went out. "I am sorry if I was rude, I thank you for your timely warning. Was it a dangerous specimen?"

SRK deliberated. "It was a small one. I did not see it very closely. It went away in a second. It ran across the corridor thus," he flung out an arm. Thump! a cloth ball fell from his hand. A couple of mango seeds rolled out. Some pieces of plantain skin scattered.

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Sivaramakrishna Iyer dared not look up for shame. Surely it was difficult to conceal things ..........

So much for the first day. The little comedy had a sequel quite exciting enough on the last day of the marriage.

Sivaramakrishna Iyer had not left. The incident had been discreetly hushed up. When all was said, the fact remained that he was an old acquaintance. And old acquaintances, for all their temporary aberrations of decorum, cannot be summarily dropped. He had been chaffed to death about it. From the moment the hoax of snake-hunting had been exploded, double-edged allusions to a serpent in the family bosom started. SRK's glib explanation that he had merely collected the seeds for future planting and the peeling for proper disposal had been tacitly accepted. For all that the frequent references to the mysterious reptile continued. SRK's courageous search all by himself for half an hour with closed doors was often applauded. His entreaties not to rub it in met with uncomprehending innocence.

In a word, his life was one exquisite agony for three whole days.

The fourth and last day of the marriage dawned. It was past twelve when the dinner - an extra-spesh grand affair—was over. SRK was unpleasantly full. Crowds are always unruly. The mob inside his stomach was no exception. A few intestinal lathi charges had followed......The afternoon was hot. SRK strolled round the extensive grounds and came to the open garage. He walked in and stopped to look at the bridal car which was to bear the couple later in the day. The big landau was charmingly hung with strings of real and artificial flowers. SRK slipped into the back seat unobserved and closed the door He sat down squarely for a moment. The cushions were very comfy, even though the unfortunate springs rebelled and groaned in protest. It was pleasantly cool. Mr. Iyer did the proper thing—tried forty winks......

All was ready for the marriage procession. The chauffeur started the car in a hurry and so he did not hear SRK's happy snore. Once started he was otherwise engaged. Thus the unfortunate man in the back woke up too late. The bride's grandfather led the pair out and opened the door of the car just as it halted. This time SRK received no quarter at his hands. The old man's words cracked viciously in the air.

"You are becoming insufferable, Sir. Why this is the height of impertinence! No, don't speak. Get away from here. What? I suppose you mean to say you saw another snake and was looking for it! Much obliged."

The procession started and the inauspicious incident was forgotten.

Young Gopal sat on the front seat of the car. By his side SRK trudged. It was no difficult matter to keep pace with the car as it crawled along. They had scarcely left the precincts of the house and emerged on to the road when a shrill cry of fear came from the young bride whose foot had touched something cold on the footrest. " A snake!" she shrieked. The car stopped. So did SRK. Gopal looked guiltily away aud smiled mysteriously.

SRK had a great inspiration. He acted in a mysterious fashion himself. Cocking an eye at the boy, he signalled silence. Meanwhile the bride was sobbing. People were rushing up...... SRK's movements were swift. He wrenched open the door and felt for the thing. "Take care," gasped the dazed bridegroom, lifting up his feet gingerly. SRK heeded not. The intrepid fellow actually took hold of the snake and flung it full fifty feet away into an adjacent compound.

The shaken bride was consoled and the procession moved away in a hurry.

The aged grandfather of the girl stopped to apologise to SRK "You were not bitten or anything? You actually touched it?" SRK smiled enigmatically. "It could have been avoided if you had but listened to me at first," he said. The old man despondently agreed. "You could have told me then we could have cleared the car immediately. My God! what a terrible affair! I hope it has done no mischief' as it is." SRK countered. "You didn't give me half a chance to speak."

"Never mind," replied 'Grandfather' hastily. "Well, you have rendered us incomparable service. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. You will soon find that my gratitude can take concrete shape." With this significant statement, he walked away.

SRK mused silently on the accident which had revealed to him Gopal's mischief. No harm in sleeping, if you keep a weather eye open all the while. SRK had had a dim vision of a boy hiding something beneath the foot-rest. He had once seen a toy rubber snake in Gopal's hands. Now he had observed his guilty smile. Sivaramakrishna Iyer could put two and two together as well as any man alive.

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# My Early Reminiscenes.

## i. Mr. Kaampan, the Pedagogue.

**By P. G. Krishna Iyer, B.A., L.T.**

OF all my early teachers, the name and figure of Mr. Kaampan who taught me in the third standard haunts my memory with a persistent obstinacy which is remarkable. Forty long and eventful years have rolled on since then: and yet I seem even now to stand before him in his class with feelings of awful dread and frightened terror. While all the villagers around averred that Mr. Kaampan was a good man, and a clever teacher of young children, to my class-mates and myself, who alone were competent to judge him by what he had really been to us in class, he seemed then a veritable incarnation of unmitigated cruelty, and relentless hard-heartedness. It may be that he had been concealing a gentle and generous heart under the cloak of a rough exterior, and an iron discipline, and that the success which has attended us so far may have been due in a large measure to the rigorous training we had had at the hands of teachers like him in our early years. But looking back on those days, I cannot, even at this distant date, help shuddering at the never-ending agony which we were subjected to, and which made school life then so intolerable, and so loathsome.

Mr. Kaampan was a thin, tall, dark figure of 40 when I knew him as my teacher for the first time. His large head had begun to show signs of baldness and the tiny tuft of knotted hair, was, according to custom, kept erect just above the forehead. His narrow wrinkled forehead and arid eyebrows, his high cheekbones and sunken but piercing eyes, and his long curved nose and wide mouth added a sort of fierceness to a face which had, externally at any rate, a severe and uncouth expression. His hands were long and sinewy; legs lank and bony; his neck emaciated, and breast cramped. He rarely smiled in class; but enforced among us a silence which was oppressive and choking.

In his attendance at school, Mr. Kaampan was regular and punctual. Day by day he would be at his post of duty as surely and as unerringly as the sun would appear in the east at the appointed hour. I could not even remember a single day on which he was absent from school on any account whatsoever. How we all wished for his absence for a day or two, and prayed long and fervently that God might strike him down with a long fever, or any other disease which would keep him bed-ridden for as long a period as possible. For, hour after hour, we felt that in his class,

we were living fettered and cramped in an atmosphere of intolerable discipline and inexpressible misery. The ill-ventilated gloomy class-room with its ugly environments and exasperating punishments was a veritable hell ; and the tedious class hours, a prolonged and painful enactment of a tragical drama from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. with a welcome interval of one hour, at midday. The punishments already borne in the forenoon, and the prospective ones in store in the afternoon, embittered life, and engendered desperation of the worst kind. But we were helpless, as our guardians honestly believed that Mr. Kaampan was a good-hearted, well-intentioned man, and that his punishments were all for our good. They even quoted apothegms from the Shastras and Smrithis in support of their contention. Unable to bear our lot any longer, my little companions and myself took courage in both our hands and openly protested and swore with all the earnestness we could command that he was an unmerciful tyrant who would one day drink our innocent blood, or swallow us up in one mouthful. But ours remained a cry in the wilderness ; for, our master invariably got the better of us ; and we had to bow down to the inevitable, and to be under his terrible thumb for long, long months.

Mr. Kaampan's punishments were staggeringly novel and painfully crude. In class he was never seen without his cruel cane which had grown brownish-red as if it had drunk deep of the blood of the several batches of little children whose lot it was to pass through the portals of his class year after year. My palms and wrists, back and hip, thighs and legs—all seem to ache even now at the thought of the punishments he was inflicting on them, then. When I recollect how my comrades and myself aged seven or eight were made to stand on the floor, on the benches and on the desks, sometimes erect, and often bent, and in the burning sun at midday with our rosy faces turned towards the blazing heavens ; when I remember how many of us had to stand bent with our satchels, benches, desks, or the teacher's chair placed on our bended backs for hours at a stretch, with tears rushing down our swollen cheeks from our blood-shot eyes, learning by rote endless lines of incomprehensible poetry, and repeating parrot-like the formidable array of historical dates, geographical terms, or mathematical tables, and when I call back to my mind the days on which some of us were not let off even for the much-looked-for midday meal, and were detained long after 4 O'clock while almost all our school-fellows had gone home and were running and frolicking free as the air, my heart alternately sinks down with feelings of depression too deep for words to express adequately, and then leaps up in exultant joy that those miserable days were past, and that I have been destined to pass out of

his hands unscathed in body and in mind to rule over thousands of boys entrusted to my care with feelings of love, and to bind them on to my person with the silken cords of affection and sympathy.

What a mercy that those days of savage and whimsical punishments which were trumpeted and set in operation in the name of discipline are gone, never I hope, to return at any time or in any shape in the future, and that the school no longer savours of the Plutonic world where little children were treated with criminal folly and callous cruelty before which the untold miseries and the unmitigated sufferings of the unfortunate galley slaves would pale into insignificance.

Even outside the school hours, our master carried his grim gravity, especially when he happened to see school boys. The news that he was seen somewhere near the village was sufficient to spoil all our games, to chill beyond recognition all our mirthful enjoyments, and to drive us away in the twinkling of an eye to the remotest nooks and corners of hiding far beyond the reach of his eagle eyes.

But in fairness to him it must be admitted that with all his discipline and sternness, he was very earnest about his work. Regular and punctual at school, he never spared himself even a moment during the school hours. Viewed from our modern standpoint, his educational qualifications might have been poor: his teaching, irrational and crude; his explanations and elucidations, queer and provoking: and his treatment of the subjects in general, ludicrous. But to us, his frightened little folk, he seemed a wonderful encyclopaedia of knowledge and wisdom. Naturally reserved, and not a little dull, he would at times break the usual monotony and teach with earnestness amounting almost to liveliness. I have on several occasions watched him from a respectable distance arguing with consummate skill and considerable vehemence, and yet, with commendable reserve and detachment: and I had often wondered how from his languid and parched-up tongue could emanate such strange lightning and thunder.

Born and brought up in poverty, Mr. Kaampan was naturally melancholy; and his miserably poor pay and prospects only added to the gloomy outlook which he manifested all his life. He was very simple in his dress and very moderate in his habits. I wonder whether he ever changed the black coat and the Kakhi shirt which he had put on on the day he set his foot in our class that year. During midday, he would eat a couple of plantain fruits of varying size and variety, and would drink a cup or two of God's cold water. He was evidently a poor eater, for he must

have been suffering from chronic dyspepsia. Tobacco he constantly chewed: but not with betels. He would gladly accept rolls of well-seasoned tobacco of the best variety from even his boys, old and new. But you may be sure that you could not buy him off with tobacco, or for the matter of that, with all the riches of the world. For, he had the reputation of being a very correct man whose dealings were above reproach, and beyond calumny, though his enemies (who were not many) hummed from afar that his ways were crooked, and his policy despicable opportunism.

It was at a time when punishments were regarded as an indispensable adjunct to good and efficient teaching and when teachers were raised to the status of infallible supermen possessing unlimited and illimitable disciplinary powers of an inordinate nature at school that Mr. Kaampan lived and worked as a school master. Public opinion had been so cast that the 'Asan' type of ruling by the rod had become the accepted fashion of the day. The idea that educational Institutions ought to be the sacred temples of learning where sympathy and love are to be the ministering angels, and where life has ever to be made pleasant and attractive to children, had not yet dawned, nor had the spirit of rebellion against irrational and conservative thoughts, and dogmatic dicta begun to stir the restless and freedom-loving minds of the students. Whether Mr. Kaampan, who was by common consent acknowledged to be a successful teacher by his contemporaries, would have managed the modern types of boys with his meagre equipments and obsolete methods, without incurring derisive public odium and delicate legal complications of a calamitous nature, one need not pause to examine and to decide. That he was a typical product of his times, and that he was discharging his pedogogic duties and responsibilities according to his lights and convictions without fear or favour, are sufficient justification for whatever he had been, and whatever he had been doing and achieving as a teacher of little children for over three decades. Judged by the standard of the times in which he lived, moved and had his being, Mr. Kaampan, the inexorable teacher of the third standard more than forty years ago, presents the figure of a unique teacher, who exhibited in a very high degree, distinctive pedagogic qualities, and who, enforcing a variety of novel punishments in the name of discipline which were not only tolerated, but even applauded, carried on the work of teaching, much to the chagrin of his boys, but greatly to the satisfaction of his conscience, envy of his colleagues, and appreciation of his superiors. May his soul rest in peace!

# Hymn to Shiva Mahadev.

Chidambaram, Chidambaram !
Home of the mystic Lord of Dance,
Where Nanda burned in holy trance
Before the heart of his desire,—
Ecstatic Monarch of the Fire,
Natarajan, Natarajan !

Natarajan, Natarajan !
King of the fierce cremation ground,
Thy dancing feet make thunderous sound
As golden flames stream in the air
That leaps around thine altar fair,—
Chidambaram, Chidambaram !

Chidambaram, Chidambaram !
Shrine of the Meditating Lord,
Where Nanda danced upon the sward
In mystic union with his Love,—
While fiery banners waved above,—
Natarajan, Natarajan !

Natarajan, Natarajan !
Eternal Shiva on the Bull ;
Our hearts with swelling joy are full,
Our garlands long to touch Thy feet,
We outcastes run unto Thy seat,—
Chidambaram, Chidambaram !

Chidambaram, Chidambaram !
The Dancing Yogi in thy Hall
Wears cobra garland, tiger shawl,
His ageless body smeared with ash
Has inner eye with deadly flash,—
Natarajan, Natarajan !

Natarajan, Natarajan !
Himalaya's silent Lord of Power
Whose locks bear Ganges as a flower,
Inspire in us sweet thoughts of Thee,
Blue-throated Shiv, eternally ;
As camphor burns within an hour
We burn our lives in love for Thee,
Natarajan, Natarajan !
Mahadeva, Mahadeva !

—*Duncan Greenlees.*

———:o:———

# Loves' Pangs.*

**By V. R. M.**

Oh! That tree, even now whenever I see that tree, a thrill runs through my veins, my steps waver, my eyes bedew with tears, my wounded heart beats violently against its sides.

Still dost thou, O shameless heart, leap for that moon unattainable ?

For the burning soul, even the shadow of past happiness and spent delight is a source of deep consolation.

Lo ! The bird of Time beating its wings of night and day, how far has it fluttered ! How many stars twinkled and vanished ! How many blossoms bloomed and withered ! Beauteous eyes, how many faded ! What are all these, but mere shadowy shapes crawling about the Great Truth ?

"To love I am a slave," She lisped tenderly. That beautiful evening when I stood sipping the honey that flowed from her ruby lips, that company of gazing stars, that gentle breeze is still fresh and green before my mind's eye.

Her rosy cheeks flushed with red-wine, stood Evening by the Day, jubilant over the brimming golden chalice of the setting sun.

Despite the weak, vain protestations raised by the murmur of the rustling leaves to his passionate approaches, the lusty breeze clasped to his breast again and again the timid shivering creepers.

A few distant stars gazed down on new-blown flowers with love's pleading lingering looks, and they their response raised by their scented sights.

Ecstatic with pervading-perfumes the bee, with love thrilled lips kissed the shy heavy-lidded eyes of the silent evening daisies.

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* From a poem in Malayalam by Mr. G. Sankara Kurup. Translated with the permission of the author.

The Sky holding the beautiful damask sleeves of the departing day delayed her with many a passionate, glowing kiss.

A single rose adorning her braided tresses, a simple sari flowing in purple over her gracefully heaving breast, youth's tender bloom revealing itself in every feature of hers, tell-tale looks of love darting from underneath her silken lashes, like the very living embodiment of all my juvenile dreams; she stood before me lisping sweetly, "To love I am a slave". That pose of hers even now dips my eyes in a pool of bliss.

With joy's tears she entrusted me her life with all its infinite charms and I flattered myself, as would the penniless if a whole kingdom be offered to him. Love my realm unconquerable, that tender hand my beautiful golden sceptre rare, that heart with all its exceptional goodness my choicest treasure imperishable! Happiness enough to enjoy a thousand lives was therein packed for me within the narrow span of a moment.

Love, thou art a lovely rose, thy tender petals fall fast. There-after with cruel thorns thou dost prick the very life!—I hate thee.

Alas! Love's triumphant march must cease on the burning pyre, on the border of Death's domain!

A handful of ashes is all that remains of the she of my delight, of the pageant of my eyes.

The rainbow vanishes in a moment; the flower lasts only a short day; clasped by the golden light of morn, the dew drop on the grass disappears fast; the lightning in the sky flashing fades the very next moment. The shortness of existence only goes to enhance the charm.

Twinborn with the rainbow and the rose, that siren Star lit my weary life a few years and I reckon myself fortunate.

# Swami Vivekananda in London.

### By Sri Mahendranath Dutta.

[The series of articles of which this is the first are compiled by Swami Jagadiswarananda from the Bengali memoirs of Mr. Dutta, the brother of the Swami. Dutta had gone to England to study Law, but being dissuaded to do so by his illustrious brother, the Swami, he studied other subjects. He has travelled widely in Russia and Palestine and other countries in Europe and Asia. He is an epitome of the Swami physically, mentally and spiritually. He is a bachelor, a saint. a Rishi in white robes. He is an erudite scholar of encyclopoedic intellect and a profound thinker and author of about a dozen books both in English and Bengali. His book on the psychology of Art has been highly appreciated by Romain Rolland, Abanindranath Tagore and other savants.—*S. J.*]

I

AFTER his historic speech in the Chicago Parliament of Religions the Swami made a lecturing-tour throughout the United States. He became tired and exhausted with continual speeches and discourses and came to England for a rest for the first time in 1894 or 1895. After a rest of about a couple of months he went back to America to resume the preaching of Vedanta.

Again in April or May of 1896 he came for the second time to England and, at the request of Mr. E. F. Sturdy, put up with him in Reading. Sturdy was formerly a Theosophist and came to India. He rented a house in Almora and lived there for practising Yoga. During his stay there he was intimately acquainted with Swami Shivananda, and from there both came to Madras. Then he corresponded with Swami Vivekananda in America.

Swami Saradananda, also sailed for England to meet the Swami by S. S. *Rewa* of B. I. S. N. Co. in the last week of April or first week of May of the same year. Swamiji wrote to Sturdy from America ; so the Swami from India was cordially received and accommodated in Sturdy's house. The Swami came from America with his devoted disciple and stenographer, J. J. Goodwin.

It is due to the labour of love of the faithful Goodwin that the complete works of Swami Vivekananda in seven volumes have seen the light of day. He took shorthand notes of all the talks and lectures of his master and accompanied him to Calcutta. But for reasons of health he had to leave for Madras and died in

Ooty. He had a mind to publish all the lectures of the Swami leisurely from his notes but could not do so owing to sudden death. Had all those been published, there would have been seven more volumes of the complete works of the Swami. Alasingha and some other Madrasi disciples of the Swami transmitted all the belongings of Goodwin to his widowed mother in the village of Frome near Bath, in England. A few years after, when Sister Nivedita went to England in search of them to recover those notes she got no trace of them. Goodwin's mother left Frome with her two daughters.

The Swami lived in 57, St. George's Street with Goodwin, Swami Saradananda and old Miss Henrietta Muller, where Krishna Menon and myself used to see him daily. Krishna Menon met the Swami in Madras before going to the West and for some time was an attendent on him there. Though the Swami was my brother I took time to recognise him ; he was so much transfigured even physically with spiritual energy and *sakti*. Narendranath of Calcutta was no more in that body ; he became altogether a different man. In the former body the *Mahasakti* of the world-conqueror Vivekananda had entered. Even the bodily complexion was more fair, what is called in English fair brown colour, only not white, with wide long eyes, a little swelling in the lower brows. The eyes were emanating great teja and magnetism ; voice, hushing, commanding, high-sounding and reverberating ; gesture and posture, movement and stature all those of a Royal conqueror.

After a week's stay in the above place the Swami shifted to the house of Miss Muller with Swami Saradananda and myself. That was a well-equipped village house with comode, fire-place, green-house and so on. Mr. and Mrs. Sturdy used to come there daily. One day the topic turned to the future plan of work in America, England and India when he was lying down. In the course of the talk he became inspired and got up ; his face became grave and serious. He said in the moment of excitement :—"This time I shall give hundred years to this body. I have to accomplish harder tasks and the task in this life is much more harder than in other lives." For now he remembered his past births like Buddha and Mahavira. Again he added—" The Work is just begun, only a few small waves in America and a tidal wave has to be created ; the course of the thought of the world must be changed. A new civilisation must be given to the world. The world will witness the greatest manifestation of power. I shall have to work till the last moment of my life." Thus he continued for twenty minutes. Evening was drawing near, so he tried to control himself. Birds were chirping and he compared them to Indian chirping. He

concealed his thoughts with difficulty but his face was beaming and his fiery eyes were radiating sparks still. All present were astonished to pin-drop silence.

The Swami himself was the embodiment of his teaching. 'Whatever you do, let that be your worship for the time being.' Occasionally in London also he took to sports and used to become like playful jolly boys forgetting everything else. When he played and made jests it seemed as if his whole being was concentrated on them. One day when he was very cheerful he took us to a field at about 4 P. M. Miss Muller's gardener, Arthur, provided us with a bicycle from green house. Swami Saradananda and myself tried to learn cycling with little success; but the Swami mastered it in no time and while pedalling cut jokes with us and then hummed a song in his inimitable melodious voice :— 'Who has launched my pet boat into the waters so early? I thought it is a play as the pleasant breeze is blowing and I shall sail away to eternity easily ........."

Though the Swami was a religious preacher he used to button his collar in the front unlike the Christian Missionaries who do it on the rear side neck He had no neck-tie also but had a golden watch. Amidst the rich and luxurious foods in the West he never forgot his simple national foods. He used to prepare now and then Indian curries and relished them with his friends. Swamiji was very fond of cayne pepper (as the chilli is called in London). So one day Krishna Menon bought three of them each for a shilling and the Swami ate one during his meals.

Miss Muller fixed a date with Prof. Max Muller by correspondence for an interview with Swami. According to the Swami's instructions Swami Saradananda wrote a short sketch of the life and teachings of Ramakrishna which was approved by Swamiji with slight additions and alterations. The next day the Swami met the Professor and presented him with this manuscript. Later on Prof. Max Muller in writing his book on Sri Ramakrishna drew the materials mainly from this note.

Miss Muller was a little peevish, so Goodwin could not pull on with her long amicably. So the Swami shifted his lodgings to the house of Lady Mergusson at 57, St. George's Street. While talking one day with Mr. Sturdy he narrated a story: "When I was wandering in India with bare feet and bare body like a typical *Parivrajaka* I met with some Theosophists in a train bound for Ahmedabad. They were talking about their Mahatma Kutmilal and were vommitting as it were all supernatural and mysterious stories. I was then without food for a couple of days and stricken with burning hunger. I had yellow robes on and in response to

an enqiry I told them that I was coming from Hardwar. I told them: I am a wandering monk who moves from place to place like flowing water. They all prevailed upon me to say something about Kutmilal as they had the firm belief that I must have seen him as I was coming from the Himalayas. By way of joke, in order to amuse myself, I told them that I saw Kutmilal and attended one of his festivals of feeding hundreds of monks sumptuously with various delicious sweetmeats. They all believed me literally and brought me some food to eat. After eating when I was a little stronger I vehemently rebuked them saying—'You are all educated men, yet you are all befooled by the mystery-mongering and miracle-hunting Theosophists, and I explained to them the true spirit of Religion which consists in self-control, purity of mind and unselfishness'."

One day the Swami told us about a funny happening in America. In the Chicago World's Fair there was an easily irritable Mahratti shop-keeper who was selling Indian products. The newspaper reporters hunting for novel news came and talked with the man and then their topic turned on an Indian Maharajah. The shop-keeper was a sentimental man and he spoke ill of the Maharajah. The reporter unfortunately forgot his name and as my name was then well-known they published the verbatim conversation in my name. But then I got an inkling of it. By chance my brother met the man in London and in a minute's talk came to know that he was the very man of Chicago Fair. He was called Rajawari or colloqually Richi. The Swami remarked at the end that such is the go of the world.

Swami Saradananda and myself had suffered from malarial fever in Calcutta for about two years. In London also we were attacked by the same intermittant fever. One day we were laid up with a severe attack and consequent shivering and headache in the upstair rocking horse room of the house. The Swami was then sitting in a chair in the drawing room below and was sending Goodwin frequently to nurse us. Swami Saradananda got delirium also. So the Swami applied will-force without our knowledge and charged us with *Pran-energy* to drive away fever. After a few minutes he came up to us and while facing to and fro encouraged us and said : "I have driven away malaria from your systems, it will never attack you again. Don't take quinine any more, throw them in the dustbin." Feverish dosing and dosing left us already and we sat up then and there after the remission of the fever throwing blankets and quilts from our bodies. We got the instantaneous effect of his will-power. The Swami told us that by the transmission of *Prana-sakti* even obstinate and chronic

diseases may be cured. The Swami had many psychic powers, but he never used them for himself.

One day the Swami met Dr. Vane with Miss. Muller who was a student of the latter in the Cambridge University. Dr. Vane was a veteran logician and spent the whole life in the study of logic. As the author of "Logic of Chance" he was honoured in Europe as one of the authorities on the subject. The Swami had a long talk with him on logical theories of different countries, of the Greeks, the Christians, the Buddhists and the Hindus. The Swami was at home in the subject. Prof. Vane was under the impression that the Swami, being a preacher of Religion, was quite a layman in Logic. He was highly pleased with the Swami after the conversation and opined that the Swami was as learned as himself and said " He is one of the best logicians of India and can cope with the best intellect of the West."

The Swami began lecturing in London first from 11 A. M. to 1 P. M., but as many could not attend, the time was changed to 7 P. M. on Tuesdays and Fridays. After a month lectures were delivered on Sundays at 4 P. M. in the water-painting Gallery of Piccadilly Royal Institute. House class-lectures on Raja-yoga were also continued. During the discourse the Swami spoke for about two hours continuously and supported his views with quotations from various scriptures. An unknown woman in nurse's dress used to come and take shorthand notes in his daily lectures and talks. No one knows her then or now. In his talks the Swami commented fluently on History, Philosophy, Physics, Chemistry and various subjects of East and West. Questionaire was the concluding touch of his talks. The Swami used to please every questioner with convincing replies. On some days questions were put at the very outset of the class and continued till the end of it. The Swami had such command over so many abstruse subjects that it was sometimes difficult for the audieuce to follow his deep and difficult expositions. He delivered his first lecture on the very day he cured our fever by sheer will force.

*(To be continued).*

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# Book Reviews.

**Journal of Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute**, Vol. III, Published by The Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute of Roerich Museum. Price Rs. 5.

This annual issue of the Journal of the Institute is a sumptuous volume carrying many valuable contributions from eminent men of various fields of scientific research, and several excellent plates and portraits. Frontispieced with an apparently recent autographed portrait of SVEN HEDIN to whom the volume is dedicated. it opens with a beautiful sketch of the life and works of this illustrious and indefatigable Central Asian explorer, and gives us several interesting and instructive articles like Prof. Kashyap's Account of a journey to Gangotri glaciers indicating the grandeur of the landscape scenery and the floral wealth of the Himalayas, and Ariadne's clues to excavations setting forth the important preparatory stages of excavations. The monograph on the Tibetian Dialect of Lahul with its vocabulary etc. by the well known philologist and expert in Central Asian languages Georges de Roerich is a very valuable and decent book in itself. Besides these the volume contains many edifying articles and essays on different scientific subjects and a short summary of the recent archaeological finds in India. The activities and progress of the work of the Institution during the year 1932 are reported herein. There are also in the volume critical estimates of numerous scientific works submitted to the journal for review. The volume. keeps a high level of thought and erudition, and richness of information and will make a worthy addition to the library of the scholar, historian, scientist, and even the lay man.

*P. M. H.*

**Principles of Composition**. By C. Leigh S. J. Available with the Procurator, St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly. 337 pp. Price Re. 1—8—0.

This handsomely got up little volume is by a fine scholar, who has had the advantage of long experience as teacher and professor in the St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly and as University Examiner on many occasions. The knowledge which such experience inevitably brings with it of the notions of University students on English Composition and of the various very common errors they commit has been felicitously brought to bear on the subject. One realises the great need for a treatise of this kind when one becomes aware of the all but sad state that the general standard of writing English by the students of the sixth form and of the first years of the University course has degenerated into in recent years. Without however, going deep into the problem raised by this fact, it would be pertinent to point out that this volume will go a long way towards rectifying the evil.

The writing of this book has been inspired by the noble aim of providing practical instruction to novices who can at best write correct sentences but who would, with a suitable guide, be able to treat it as an art, which, of course, is to give expression to well-conceived and beautiful thoughts in a

clear, forcible and beautiful way, free from vagueness, stilted and clumsy forms of expression and pretentious mannerism that are now-a-days the bane of cheap and popular journalism.

The subject has been treated with thoroughness covering the entire field of the Art of Composition, and with what labour it will be seen from the copious references the book is studded with. The work is divided into two parts—" the Art of Writing," dealing generally with what books a student should study, how to study them and with various literary models; and " Composition," giving practical advice on the proper use of words and sentences, the construction of different kinds of paragraphs and on the methods of descriptive, narrative and expository writing. There are three appendices at the end on public speaking, prosody and models, of which the section on prosody will be of the utmost use to students who ordinarily know too little about it to appreciate fully poetry.

It is generally to be expected that a book of this kind will be dry, matter-of-fact and uninteresting—even boring. The unique feature of this book, however, is that with utility it mixes up amusement, and that is about all that a work ought to be if it were to serve any useful purpose. The book is written in a clear, easy and conversational style that provides pleasant reading without fatiguing the reader. There can be no doubt that this volume will be welcomed and appreciated by both the teachers and the taught of the High Schools and University classes in our Presidency.

*N. Srinivasan*,
Lecturer, Salem College.

**A Source-book of Indian History** by K. Srinivasa Kini, B. A., L. T. Published by The Basel Mission Book and Tract Depot, Mangalore, Price Re. 1-8.

Various kinds of source-books containing reproductions of original documents for the study of British History have long been available. But the student of Indian History has not been furnished with many such works. The book under consideration aims at supplying in part the want of a collection of original texts which will enable the student to obtain a fair idea of the foundation of Indian historical information. Extracts from various works and official documents of the different periods of the history of India are here presented in chronological order. But the book is indicative rather than illustrative of the bases of Indian History. It does not set forth all the valuable documents evidencing the condition of the country at its several periods, but only points out how and where one can find materials for an intelligent study of its history and also the nature of the material available. The compilation will however, open the eyes of the student to pursue the path sensibly and inspire him to substantial research in the field and bring our more comprehensive source-books of Indian History.

The short notes on the historical personages and the bibliography of original works are welcome additions to the book. But when the next edition of the book comes out we should like to see the addition of a few, more representative documents for each period of the history and a short critical note to the extracts chosen for each epoch to enable the students and the laymen to appreciate readily the importance of the original texts. An index is also very desirable.

The printing and get up of the book shows the usual good taste and efficiency of the publishers, and we should think that the book is only moderately priced. This pioneer work in the field of Source-books of Indian History for the use of High Schools and Colleges will, we hope, find favour with students and teachers of Indian History as well as the public.

*P. M. R.*

**A Course in Indian Civics** by Gulshan Rai Bhatnagar, B.A., LL.B., Macmillan & Co., Ltd. Price Re. 1-12.

This book gives in a short compass an account of the system of British administration in India. Beginning from the lowest unit of administration, the village, the author treats about the local self-governing institutions, provincial governments and finally with the Central government and its relationship with the government in Great Britain. Without encumbering the account with details and with great discrimination, the author briefly but clearly traces the history of each institution, sufficient to have a general knowledge of its genisis, growth and development. We have not come across another book of this kind which though brief is so clear and so full of facts. The work is outlined with special reference to the conditions obtaining in the Punjab, especially those with regard to village administration with the special object of meeting the needs of the Punjab Intermediate students. But none the less the book will, as the author hopes, suit the requirements of students of civics of other Indian provinces as well.

*M. S. K.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**The Western India Life Insurance Co., Ltd.** If the intrinsic excellence of a Life Assurance Company is to be tested not merely with reference to its size and age, but in accordance with its financial soundness, then the Western India Life Insurance Co., Ltd., of Satara would occupy as we find from its Nineteenth Annual Report, the foremost place among the life offices in our country. Reviewing its business for the year 1932, we find that it issued 3051 policies for a total amount of Rs. 37,12,000, which is nearly Rs. 5,60,000 more than the business for the previous year, a creditable achievement in view of the acute financial depression of the period. Its total income for the year amounted to Rs. 11,48,000 and it settled claims for Rs. 1,68,000. It had a total Reserve Fund of Rs. 6,37,000 besides the Life Fund of Rs. 35,19,000. The progress of the Company has been steady and thoroughly satisfactory. Its strong points, as revealed by the Report, appear to be its very low expense ratio which is looked upon as the crucial test of the financial soundness of a life office,— careful investment policy and adequate reserves. There are only two or three other Indian Companies which have to their

credit an expense ratio of less than 20% to the total income. We can confidently hope for still better results from this progressive Life Insurance Company, in future.

**The Asian Assurance Co., Ltd.** We have received a copy of the Directors' report and the Actuary's Valuation report and the statement of accounts of The Asian Assurance Co., Ltd., Bombay for the year 1932. The report shows steady improvement all round. 2724 proposals were received during the year out of which 2066 proposals resulted into policies assuring Rs. 32,63,125. The premium income amounts to Rs, 1,36,144 showing an increase of Rs. 45,000 over that of the last year. Claims absorbed Rs. 2,52405. The life fund was augmented by nearly Rs. 4,00,000, and it stands at Rs. 24,50,324. The total number of policies in force comes to 8,975 assuring Rs. 1,48,40,801. The valuation shows a surplus of Rs. 2,56,778. This has enabled the Directors to declare a bonus at the rate of Rs. 18 and 14 per thousand per year on whole life and endowment policies respectively.

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